

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PRS-01 SSO-00 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:JCHAMBERLAIN:JC
APPROVED BY PA:WDYESS
S/S- MR. SEBASTIAN
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PA, S/S, S/PRS

-----272300Z 004222 /70

O 272228Z DEC 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 311305 TOSEC 340034

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT WASHINGTON STAR EDITORIAL
MONDAY DECEMBER 27 HEADED "CIVIL RIGHTS IN VIETNAM."

2. IT WOULD BE EASY ENOUGH TO REGISTER SOPHISTICATED
SCORN FOR JOAN BAEZ, THE BERRIGANS AND THE OTHER DOVE
MILITANTS OF YESTERYEAR WHO HAVE TURNED TO PROTESTING
"GRIEVOUS AND SYSTEMATIC VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS" BY
THE VICTORIOUS DISCIPLES OF HO CHI MINH WHO NOW CONTROL A
UNITED VIETNAM. WHAT DID THEY EXPECT? DIDN'T THEY EVER
HEAR OF THE MOSCOW TRIALS AND THE GULAG ARCHipelago?
DON'T THEY SEE WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE RE-EDUCATION CAMPS
OF CHINA TODAY?

3. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, MANY ANSWERS TO THESE RHETORICAL
QUESTIONS, AND NOT ALL OF THEM ARE EITHER PERFUNCTORY

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OR DISMISSIVE. BETWEEN THE DEBRIS OF FRENCH COLONIALISM
AND THE BLUNDERING CRUELTIES AND CORRUPTIONS OF A SOCIETY
TRYING TO REMAKE ITSELF IN AN ALIEN STYLE IN THE MIDST
OF A WAR, NON-COMMUNIST VIETNAM OFFERED PLENTY OF OUTRAGES
FOR IDEALISM TO DEPLORE. AND, WHEN THE IMPULSE TO DO
SOMETHING ABOUT CLEARLY PERCEPTIBLE EVILS IS REINFORCED

BY UTOPIAN HOPE, IT'S EASY TO IGNORE THE IDEA THAT WINNING
MIGHT NOT BE ALL GOOD.

4. IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE, CERTAINLY. THE LIST OF
WESTERN INTELLECTUALS WHO, EVEN UNDER STALIN, CLUNG TO
THEIR FAITH IN THE SOVIET UNION AS A JUST AND FREE
SOCIETY IS ALL TOO LONG. BECAUSE IT WAS SO HARD TO ADMIT
BEING WRONG, AND SO HARD TO SEE AN EMOTIONAL INVESTMENT
TURN SOUR--SO HARD, ALSO, TO FIND THEMSELVES ON THE SAME
SIDE WITH PEOPLE THEY WERE IN THE HABIT OF CONSIDERING
THE ENEMY--THEY, FIRST, DENIED EVIDENCE AND THEN TOOK
A TOUGH LINE ON HOW YOU CAN'T MAKE AN OMELET WITHOUT
BREAKING EGGS.

5. THAT SORT OF THING IS GOING ON NOW IN AN OPPOSING
FACTION OF THE AMERICAN ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE,
GARETH PORTER OF THE INDO-CHINA RESOURCE CENTER HAS
SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE CITIZENS' ORGANIZATION FOR A SANE
WORLD AND AN AD HOC GROUP INCLUDING JOAN BAEZ, DANIEL
ELLSBERG AND THE BERRIGANS, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE PROTESTED
TO HANOI AND THE U.N. ABOUT THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS
OF PEOPLE REPORTED TO BE IN VIETNAMESE RE-EDUCATION CAMPS.

6. IT ISN'T SO, HE SAYS. AND, BESIDES, DIDN'T THE THIEU
GOVERNMENT'S "REPRESSIVE APPARATUS" INCLUDE AT LEAST
395,000 PEOPLE? RE-EDUCATING THEM WOULDN'T BE AT ALL THE
SAME THING AS PERSECUTING SOMEONE FOR POLITICAL OR
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, WOULD IT?

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7. WHEN, A GENERATION AGO, ARTHUR KOESTLER WAS CHANGING
ALLEGIANCES, HE SUMMED UP ONE ASPECT OF THE PROBLEMS
IT GAVE HIM BY SAYING THAT THE TROUBLE WITH BEING ANTI-
COMMUNIST WAS THAT YOU FOUND YOURSELF IN SUCH BAD
COMPANY. TO HIM, AS A RELUCTANT SUPPORTER OF WESTERN
DEMOCRACY, IT BECAME A MATTER OF "DEFENDING THE BAD
AGAINST THE WORSE."

8. WHETHER HISTORY WILL BE REPETITIOUS ENOUGH TO MAKE
JOAN BAEZ AN EX POST FACTO DEFENDER OF LYNDON JOHNSON
REMAINS TO BE SEEN. MEANWHILE, IT IS REFRESHING TO FIND
HER AND OTHERS LIKE HER APPLYING THE SAME STANDARD OF
CIVIL RIGHTS TO HANOI AS TO SAIGON. (END TEXT.)
ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE311305
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCHAMBERLAIN:JC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760473-0390
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761212/aaaaajyn.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2004 by chengls>; APPROVED <22 DEC 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, SHUM, US, VS, VN, WASHINGTON STAR, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006